

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a strategy and implementation plan to improve hiring and retention of U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel in rural or remote areas, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GOLDEN of Maine introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a strategy and implementation plan to improve hiring and retention of U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel in rural or remote areas, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “U.S. Customs and Bor-
5 der Protection Rural and Remote Hiring and Retention
6 Strategy Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. U.S. CUSTOMERS AND BORDER PROTECTION STRAT-**
2 **EGY.**

3 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than one year after the
4 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Home-
5 land Security, acting through the Chief Human Capital
6 Officer of the Department of Homeland Security and the
7 Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection,
8 shall issue a strategy and implementation plan, including
9 benchmarks, to improve the hiring and retention of indi-
10 viduals by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in rural
11 or remote areas relating to employment in such areas.

12 (b) **STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS.**—The strategy re-
13 quired under subsection (a) shall take into consideration
14 the following:

15 (1) Feedback, as available, from individuals
16 who are U.S. Customs and Border Protection can-
17 didates or new hires, at locations in rural or remote
18 areas, including feedback on the quality of life in
19 such areas for new hires and their families.

20 (2) Feedback, as available, from U.S. Customs
21 and Border Protection personnel, other than new
22 hires, who are stationed at locations in rural or re-
23 mote areas, including feedback on the quality of life
24 in such areas for such personnel and their families.

25 (3) Feedback, as available, from U.S. Customs
26 and Border Protection personnel who have decided

1 to separate from U.S. Customs and Border Protec-
2 tion.

3 (4) An assessment of existing Federal pro-
4 grams, including financial incentives and other com-
5 pensation-based flexibilities, regarding how to most
6 effectively aid spouses and families of individuals
7 who are U.S. Customs and Border Protection can-
8 didates or new hires in a rural or remote area.

9 (5) An assessment of Department of Homeland
10 Security internship programs and the usefulness of
11 such programs in improving hiring by the Secretary
12 of Homeland Security in rural or remote areas.

13 (c) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN CONSIDERATIONS.—The
14 implementation plan required under subsection (a) shall—

15 (1) include a pilot or other program, as appro-
16 priate, to address hiring and retention challenges
17 faced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in
18 rural or remote areas; and

19 (2) enhance strategic recruiting efforts of U.S.
20 Customs and Border Protection through relation-
21 ships with institutions of higher education, veterans
22 transition and employment centers, and job place-
23 ment programs in regions that could assist in filling
24 positions in rural or remote areas.

25 (d) REPORTS.—

1 (1) REPORT TO CONGRESS AND GAO.—Begin-
2 ning on the date that is one year after the date of
3 the issuance of the strategy and implementation
4 plan required under subsection (a) and every three
5 years thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security
6 shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security
7 of the House of Representatives, the Committee on
8 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the
9 Senate, and the Comptroller General of the United
10 States on the extent to which such strategy and im-
11 plementation plan have affected the hiring and re-
12 tention by U.S. Customs and Border Protection of
13 employees in rural or remote areas.

14 (2) BRIEFING TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
15 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act
16 and every 90 days thereafter until the strategy and
17 implementation plan under subsection (a) are issued,
18 the Secretary of Homeland Security shall brief the
19 Committee on Homeland Security of the House of
20 Representatives, the Committee on Homeland Secu-
21 rity and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and
22 the Comptroller General of the United States on the
23 progress of so issuing such strategy and implementa-
24 tion plan.

1 (3) GAO ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 120
2 days after receiving each briefing required under
3 paragraph (2), the Comptroller General of the
4 United States shall submit to the committees speci-
5 fied in such subsection an assessment of the effec-
6 tiveness of U.S. Customs and Border Protection ac-
7 tions described in each such briefing, including rec-
8 ommendations for improvements as the Comptroller
9 General determines appropriate.

10 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
12 term “institution of higher education” has the
13 meaning given such term in section 102 of the High-
14 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

15 (2) NEW HIRE.—The term “new hire” means
16 an individual appointed to a position within U.S.
17 Customs and Border Protection and who, during the
18 one year period preceding such date of appointment,
19 occupied a position in U.C. Customs and Border
20 Protection for fewer than 365 days.

21 (3) RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS.—The term
22 “rural or remote areas” means areas within the
23 United States that are not within an area defined
24 and designated as urbanized areas by the Bureau of
25 the Census in the most recently completed decennial

- 1 census, and includes areas along the northern and
- 2 southern borders.